

CharlesUptonAnswers

1 - First of all, how would you define what is a traditional viewpoint on the world ?

Tradition is the generation-to-generation transmission of the knowledge of the unchanging metaphysical principles upon which the universe is founded, and the Way by which the human race may actualize these principles, from the beginning of the human race to the present day, periodically enlivened by providential vertical descents of Revelation emanating directly from the Absolute. It is not primarily a nostalgia for past ages since the Truth has in fact been transmitted and is available even now. An appreciation for Tradition may include a secondary nostalgia for times when this Truth was more universally understood, but this in no way implies that it would be either desirable or possible to "return" to these times, seeing that the identical Wisdom has its unique and incomparable task to perform in every age, as well as in each moment.

2 - Are there any spiritual movements today that are in accordance with Primordial Tradition ?

No movement or individual can be in line with the Primordial Tradition today without accepting one of the revealed religions. The attempt to return to the Primordial Tradition apart from orthodoxy simply creates heterodox movements, the New Age, Neo-Paganism, etc. One could certainly say that the Traditionalist or Perennialist School, the followers of Guénon, Coomaraswamy and Schuon, are in line with the Primordial Tradition insofar as they accept the need for not simply a perfunctory but a sincere and complete adherence to the orthodoxy of a particular revelation, but I do detect an unacknowledged but definite drift among certain members of Schuon's branch of the School toward a "generic metaphysics" they see as superseding the revealed traditions. One member told me that he did not accept Titus Burckhardt's explicit requirement that anyone wishing to follow the path of traditional esoterism must adhere to one of the revealed faiths; another was willing to apply the term "Tradition" only to exoteric religion, not to "quintessential esoterism" as Schuon taught it. And the powers that be have not been slow to pick up on this chink in the Perennialist armor. In a 2010 episode of a BBC detective mystery (*Inspector Lewis*, "The Allegory of Love"), a young detective, during an interview with a Muslim professor at Oxford, remarks that the professor has a volume in his bookshelves by Titus Burckhardt, and goes ahead to briefly explain the Primordial Tradition without reference to any of the revealed faiths. Then a brief, nearly subliminal image is shown of the "Traditionalist diagram", used by Schuon's followers, of a series of concentric circle with radii; no explanation of it is given. And neither of these events have any necessary relationship to the story-line. So it is clear to me that certain entities able to influence the content of BBC-possibly Prince Charles, who has openly patronized Perennialism, or the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, which some have called the major center for social engineering in the Western world and which reputedly has a certain amount of control over BBC programming-have adopted Perennialism as a "meme" in their campaign to break down traditional society and reform it according to globalist norms. The same episode attacks Christianity more or less in the name of Islam, which is right in line with my perception that Perennialism is more and more being defined as a school *within* Islam. The powers that be undoubtedly want to use Perennialism to undermine traditional Islam even as they are employing it to reduce Christianity to a mere "parochialism" in comparison with the Primordial Tradition. (The

same episode presents the Inklings-the highly influential group of Christian writers at Oxford which included C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and Dorothy Sayers-with no reference to their Christianity at all, placing them instead in the same category of "fantasy writers" as J.K. Rowling, author of the wildly successful Harry Potter books and motion pictures, which are clearly designed to interest the young in magic and witchcraft.)

The Primordial Tradition is the root of all the religious revelations, which are its branches. The nourishing fruit of Tradition, however, grows on the branches, not the trunk. When the Primordial Tradition was first in force, particular revelations were not needed in the face of the "mass theophanic consciousness" of the Golden Age. But since the fall of the Tower of Babel, the Primordial Tradition has expressed itself only in terms of discrete religious "dialects". The Tower itself represented a false attempt to re-establish the Primordial Tradition as it was in the Golden Age by power alone, and thus foreshadowed the One World Religion presently in the research and development stage in various globalists think-tanks. I can only hope that the Perennialists will wake up in time, and not allow themselves to be used in this campaign, the final fruit of which will be the regime of *al-Dajjal*.

Within Christianity, the Eastern Orthodox are clearly in line with the Primordial Tradition (although, since they lack the dialectical precision of the Latin mind, they are poorly defended against the infiltration of modernist ideas), and we must certainly include the Traditional or *sede vaccantist* Catholics. The larger Novus Ordo Catholic Church, however, was destroyed by the modernist/Masonic/crypto-Marxist revolution known as the Second Vatican Council; see **The Destruction of the Christian Tradition** by Rama. P. Coomaraswamy. It is now a seed-bed of counter-tradition; Pope Benedict XVI, in his recent encyclical **Caritas in Veritate**, has come out in support of One World Government, and dedicated his church to its service. Within Islam, any Muslims who have resisted both modernism and the Wahhabi/Salafi reaction against it, and any Sufi orders possessing valid *silsilahs* (chains-of-transmission) who are neither seeking globalist patronage nor allying themselves with the Islamicist militants (though they must be allowed the universal right to fight to defend their homes), are definitely in line with the Primordial Tradition, as are traditional Hindus and Buddhists.

3 - According to Indian cosmology, the Kali Yuga is presently ending and we are inescapably heading to a final dissolution. To you, what could be the nature of this dissolution ?

In material terms it could entail the destruction of all life on earth, or all human life, or simply the breakup of civilization and the serious degradation of the ecosystem, leading to ages of chaos; I think the later more likely, though the first two are certainly possible. In spiritual terms, it will be the dissolution of the revealed traditions, which will it itself usher in material destruction, since the revelations are the spiritual pillars of the world, including the psychic and the material domains. This late in the cycle our spiritual orientation, if it is still viable, begins to turn toward the advent of the eschatological Savior-the Kalki Avatara, Maitreya Buddha, the Prophet Jesus, the eschatological Christ. To the degree that the coming Savior is real to us, we will see, first that the Antichrist is nothing but the resistance of the collective ego to his inevitable advent, and secondly, in the words of the Holy Qur'an, that *all is perishing but His face* ("His" meaning God's, which is only applicable to the Savior per se in Christian and Hindu terms, not in Islamic or Buddhist ones). The spiritual use of the sense that all things in the world of form are

passing away is to learn how to *let* them pass, and thereby unveil the face of Eternity. Martin Lings said that the sight of one's world in chaotic ruins may for many of us promote the development of *apatheia* and spiritual detachment to a degree possible, in earlier ages, only to heroic sanctity; in this sense (among others) the downward course of the cycle is providential. And those who are able to let go of temporality and realize Eternity in the face of impending apocalypse will form the nucleus, the seed, of the next cycle of manifestation. This nucleus will not be historical, however, though it will enter history at one point as a seed to fertilize the next cycle. Before then it will take its place above time, in the "barns" where the Almighty stores up the living potentials by which He creates the worlds.

4 - And if there is a cyclic determinism, does it mean that any act of resistance is vain ? Why is it notwithstanding necessary to inform against the counter-initiation of « the System of Antichrist » even though, as René Guénon asserts it in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, this process of dissolution is inexorable and is part of the divine plan (Guénon says this process « must be carried right to the end, so as to include a development of the inferior possibilities of the “dark age” ») ?

It is necessary in order to save our souls, and to give others more of an opportunity to save theirs. Things have now become so politicized and so collective in nature that "saving the world" has effectively replaced the idea of saving one's soul-which is unfortunate, since the world is ephemeral and the soul eternal. We can't imagine "resistance" as anything other than making a supreme effort to save the macrocosm by reversing the flow of time, by (as it were) repealing the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which is obviously impossible. And if we can't see any way to triumph in this endeavor, we often give up hope-which means that our hope has already become attached to a false object. But if we understand "resistance" as resistance to being spiritually destroyed by the darkness of the postmodern world, then resistance is certainly not vain; it is required, indispensable, and it promises success-if we stay the course-because God is on our side. And one of the necessary elements in this resistance to the world is insight into what the world is up to. The counter-initiation, the System of Antichrist is a temptation, an attempt by the powers of darkness to appropriate and pervert our idealism through false hope, to attach our hope and spiritual aspiration to false objects, and thus make us servants of illusion and evil. This is the possibility that, by the Grace of God, can and must be resisted.

As for whether or not action to deal with outer circumstances is still possible or justifiable, given the inevitable downward arc of the Yuga, that depends entirely upon the nature of the occasion, of one's personal *dharma*, and of whether or not God commands such action. In 2010, in relation to the controversy in New York City over the plan to build a mosque at the site of the destruction of the Twin Towers, I was moved to contact some Muslim friends of mine, suggesting that Muslims support the reconstruction of St. Nicholas' Greek Orthodox Church, which was destroyed on 9/11 and to the rebuilding of which the City of New York is throwing up roadblocks, while expediting the construction of the mosque. I felt that this would be a good way of defusing interfaith tensions. I gathered expressions of support for St. Nicholas from a few Muslims and provided them to the ecumenical office of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and to the imam of the proposed mosque, Feisal Abdul Rauf. Then I withdrew from the controversy. Sometimes, if you still owe some karmic dues to *al-Zahir*, the Outer, it's a good idea to pay them quickly, since this frees you concentrate more deeply upon *al-Batin*, the Inner.

The only spirit in which such action can profitably be performed is that of *karma-yoga* as presented in the **Bhagavad-gita**, where Krishna says, "Act, but dedicate the fruits of the action to Me"- the same spirit that led the Prophet Muhammad to say, "Even if you know that the world will end tomorrow, plant a tree."

5 - According to Revelation 20-7, an angel locked Satan into the Abyss and bound him for a thousand years. And when the thousand years are over, Satan will be loosed out of his prison. Is that God who releases Satan ? Even if we can't know the exact reason for this release, have you got any idea about it ?

God releases Satan in the sense that the inevitable downward course of cyclical conditions, which is in line with God's will, weakens the bonds that restrain the Adversary: the orthodox revelations. In Christian terms, it was Christ and His Church who restrained Satan in the western world by overturning a degenerate Paganism that had become Satanic. The Islamic revelation extended this overturn of Paganism to the hinterlands of the Roman Empire, and farther, and stabilized the world after the Christian revelation (which left to itself would have ushered in Apocalypse long before now) by basing itself more directly on the Primordial Tradition as represented by the Prophet Adam, and secondarily, the Prophet Abraham, than on the unique theophany that was Jesus Christ, and by consequently introducing a spacial quality as against Judeo-Christianity's more temporal/historical drive, thus moderating the destructive effects of cyclical degeneration. And the Church, by prolonging Christ's power into the historical dimension, also stood against the downward flow of the Yuga.

Satan is the agent of God's justice; the greatest punishment visited upon the primordial rebel is that he must serve God whether he likes it or not; as Frithjof Schuon put it, "Satan is the enemy of man, not the enemy of God." Certainly the Christian and Islamic revelations did not entirely restrain human evil, but they did restrain transpersonal, demonic evil. As they weaken, such evil is released. And is there any doubt that Satan has been released already? His signs are everywhere in the demonic audacity of scientism and the uniformly sinister quality of popular culture, two things that Christianity while it was still strong was able to restrain. As Eastern Orthodox priest and writer Seraphim Rose said, "In our time, Satan has walked naked into human history". The Eastern Orthodox see the "thousand-year reign of peace" that Christ brings as the church age, which is now over. Satan must be loosed because evil must constellate so as to confront the soul with the ultimate choice between Truth and illusion on every possible level.

6 - Referring to Frithjof Schuon's doctrine and Ibn al 'Arabi's principles, you talk about « the transcendent unity of religions ». However, don't you think, as Jean Borella states it, that « Just as there are different levels in light intensity, Revelatory Word can more or less explicitly express the divine Mystery ?

Each revelation is pre-eminent in its own terms, which means that each concentrates more fully than the others on a particular aspect of the Absolute in its relationship with humanity. Christianity, in its trinitarian doctrine of the One God, more perfectly reveals man within God and God within man than does Islam; Islamic "trinitarianism" appears in Ibn al-'Arabi's **Fusus al-Hikam**, but not as a central doctrine. Islam reveals more perfectly the Unity of God and the intrinsic submission of all things to Him, which is why it rejects the polytheistic/Manichaeen tendency to portray Shaytan as the literal enemy

of God. Hinduism more perfectly unveils the doctrine of the *atman*, the Absolute Indwelling Witness, which Christianity and Islam only allude to when St. Paul says "it is not I who live, but Christ lives in me" and the Prophet Muhammad, "he who knows himself knows his Lord". And Buddhism reveals more perfectly the Divine Immanence, since it starts and ends with it, as well the dangers of obscuration through the literalization of metaphysical ideas-though Dionysius the Areopagite in his **Mystical Theology** speaks of the transcendence of doctrinal forms in very Buddhist terms, while some of the other Greek Fathers describe the natural world as being the equivalent of an inspired scripture, while Islam defines the natural world as composed only of the signs of God, only of the Truth. But each tradition contains all that is needed for salvation and Liberation, sometimes explicitly, sometimes only in implicit terms. The spiritual justification for "comparative religion" is that the study of religions other than our own may illuminate true aspects of our own religion that we hadn't noticed before, or sufficiently understood. Consequently it ought to work against the tendency to think one's own religion is deficient in some way and needs to be supplemented by elements from another. Unfortunately, comparative religion often has the opposite effect, giving rise to the error that each religion has *part* of the truth, which means that only an amalgam of all of them can deliver the *whole* truth. The fact is, however, that each religion-if it is a true and revealed religion, that is, not a generic metaphysical system or a "psychic technology"-embraces the whole truth, though each possesses that truth in a different form and with a different emphasis.

7 - You who took the « road » of the sixties counter-culture and saw many of your travelling companions get lost in their quest, how do you consider this period now ? Do you think that there were two types of rebellion in the sixties ? A spiritual kind of rebellion, reacting against the birth of the consumer society and which could have nset up a path to Tradition, and another rebellion, seeking for a purely immanent joy and which used revolution to rapidly get rid of the ancient values to finally be able to drown into a frenzied consumerism with no taboos ?

That's a very good characterization of the period. The rebellion of the 60's was against everything that represented the status quo: both established religion and secularism, both the social mores and the political and economic structure. This included a "spiritual revolution", one that made the doctrines and practices of the Eastern Religions and the mystical or esoteric dimensions of the Abrahamic religions available to the public as never before. But this revolution was polluted at the outset by incursions of every pseudo-initiatory and counter-initiatory "spirituality" imaginable, both newly conceived and of ancient pedigree, including outright Satanism; by the use of psychedelics; and by the identification of mystical ecstasy with self-indulgence. The simple fact is that an interest in the mysticism and esoterism of the world's religions could never have become an element of mass consciousness if it hadn't been portrayed as "great fun"! The first book on comparative mysticism I ever read was given to me by an amphetamine addict. Allen Ginsberg's poem **Howl**, which was highly influential upon my generation, is a perfect image of the blend of mysticism, sexual indulgence, drug use and madness that characterized the hippies. It is the quality of Bohemias that they will pick up all the interests and tendencies excluded by the dominant society, no matter how intrinsically incompatible they may be. (See **Doctor Faustus** by Thomas Mann for a good picture of artistic/spiritual/political underworld of the first third of the 20th century in Germany, filled with the percolating seeds of Nazism, where proto-Nazis, Goethean idealists and heterodox Jews partied together at the soirées.) As hippies we could read the **Tibetan**

Book of the Dead and Mao's **Little Red Book**, practice yoga in hopes of gaining Enlightenment, cast a magic spell to attract a lover, withdraw from the world into a mountain retreat and dedicate ourselves to overthrowing the government, all in the space of a month or two! You could find hippies who wanted to live almost like the Mennonites-except for sex, drugs and rock-and-roll! The counterculture certainly established non-Judeo-Christian religions and the esoterisms of the Abrahamic faiths as viable spiritual alternatives, but only for the few. And in so doing, along with Vatican II (another 60's phenomenon), it essentially completed the destruction of Christendom in the western world, the final phase of which destruction began in 1914, thus ushering in immense social and moral nihilism and chaos. We still have Christianity, but Christendom is a thing of the past. President Sarkozy sees Islam as opposed to good French secularism; what he doesn't realize is that it was precisely secularism, insofar as it deconstructed Christendom in Europe, that opened the door of Europe to Islam. Humanity needs a religion, a way to God. If we don't see any ultimate, eternal significance to human life, we will live only to fulfill our desires and alleviate our fears, and this will ultimately decrease the birth-rate; if we live only for ourselves, and if we know that the government will take care of us in our old age, then why have children? Islam is being drawn into the spiritual and demographic vacuum left by the fall of Christendom, but I do not believe that it is spiritually and culturally strong enough to replace Christianity, since Islam too is on its last legs. It is blundering, blindfolded, into a Neo-Pagan continent haunted by the ghost of Christ, completely oblivious to the forces of spiritual degeneracy that it is being exposed to. And simply prohibiting the Muslim veil will not restore what Europe threw away.

8 - Does Freudian psychoanalysis belong to « the System of Antichrist » ? If it does, what is its role in this system ? In other respects, you seem to reproach Jung, despite his dissidence towards Freudian school, for being a « false traditionalist » and for serving the cause of the satanic parody, can you tell us more about that ?

Freudian psychoanalysis (which is more-or-less passé in North America) is in a certain sense a counterfeit of the guru-chela relationship that pertains, under different names, in every spiritual tradition, sometimes universally, sometimes only in the esoteric dimension. The idea that it is possible to deal with the psyche without reference to the Spirit is destructive in many ways. First, it replaces salvation of the soul with "social adjustment", this deifying the world and denying God. Secondly, it may open up the infra-psychic underworld in the absence of any traditional spiritual safeguards in such a way that the client may become demonically obsessed or possessed. This is not to say that Freudian analysis is entirely false or may not have positive results on some occasions, only that if Christian society had been capable of and willing to provide true spiritual direction to the mass of believers in Freud's time, his theories would never have become current because they would not have been necessary. Freudianism may thus be seen as one more a decay-product of Christian society. When the System of Antichrist becomes fully established Freud probably won't play a very prominent role; but be that as it may, he has already done his damage in heralding that regime. The three pillars of Modernism-Freud, Marx and Darwin-were essentially anti-traditional; they were not yet truly counter-initiatory. But now that we are in Postmodern times, truly Luciferian "spiritualities" are readily available which, in their ability to devastate the soul and place it under spiritual bondage, put Freud to shame.

On the other hand, Whitall Perry, in his article "The Revolt against Moses: A New Look at Psychotherapy", from his book **Challenges to a Secular Society**, speaks of Freud's interest in demonology and his tendency to speak highly of the Devil (whom he didn't believe in), and cites David Bakan's **Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition** to the effect that psychoanalysis was based in part upon an inversion of the Kabbalah. Perry sees the antinomianism of heterodox Jewish leaders Jacob Frank and Shabbetai Zevi as a major influence upon Freud's doctrine that it is not sin that needs to be overcome, but *guilt* for sin. The "false Messiah" Shabbetai Zevi, a bipolar psychotic who galvanized international Judaism in the 17th century before he converted, rather disappointingly, to Islam, based his doctrines on Isaac Luria's notion of the "restoration" or *tikkun* of the vessels of the seven lower sefirot of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, whose "shattering" constituted the Fall. Zevi reinterpreted this restoration in historical rather than strictly esoteric terms; thus we can conjecture that his influence might well have contributed to the general progressivism of the 18th century "Enlightenment" and ultimately to the inverted messianism of Karl Marx, whose "classless society", the product of class struggle leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat, was seen in part as a restoration of "primitive communism". Thus a case could be made that an inverted Kabbalism influenced both Marx and Freud, two of the three pillars of the modernist deviation.

A physician of my acquaintance recently unpacked for me the main skeleton in the closet of Sigmund Freud, based on certain papers he discovered in his U.S. archives. Early in his medical training Freud had come across many corpses of children in the Vienna morgue that showed signs of physical and sexual abuse. And when he began his career as a psychoanalyst, he heard a lot of stories from upper middle class ladies of incest and sexual abuse of children. But when he presented his findings to his professional association, he was booed off stage; his career was almost destroyed. After a long depression during which he became reclusive, he emerged with a new theory: that it was really the *children* who wanted to seduce the *parents*. This theory was accepted enthusiastically by his colleagues, and his career was made. In other words, Freud's whole theory of the Oedipus and Electra complexes was based on a self-interested coverup of child abuse.

As for Carl Jung, he was an important figure to many of my generation, especially the poets. In the poetry scene of 1970's San Francisco, he almost held the position of Chief Hierophant, guide to all the mysteries of the Unconscious. In the 1970's, the counterculture, and progressively the entire culture of the U.S., was living through an Age of Mythopoesis. Jung and his followers were being read; Joseph Campbell (who ended up as "mythic adviser" to George Lucas for his Star Wars movies) was becoming known; and poet Robert Bly and others were laboring to bring the mysteries of Jungian psychology and mythopoetic literature to the masses. At the same time, Jung was exerting a powerful and destructive influence upon the Catholic Church which-having been all but abolished in its traditional form by the Second Vatican Council-was groping for some way to relate to its own rich mythopoetic heritage, so much so that Jungian psychology almost replaced the Church Fathers as the golden key to scriptural exegesis for Novus Ordo Catholics. This was also the Age of the Goddess, when western civilization, in the process of its own deconstruction, was processing great waves of "matriarchal" material liberated from its repressed collective memory. While the Leftist/Feminists were pressing for women's rights, deconstructing the family and destroying any viable social role that a man *as man*, or woman *as woman*, could base his or her life upon (this being an expression of

the anti-sexual Puritanism that hid under the so-called "sexual revolution"), the tender-minded among us, both men and women, were deliquescing in the murky "feminine" waters of the Collective Unconscious. And it is certainly true that Jung's greatest followers of the second and third generations were mostly women: Esther Harding, Marion Woodman, and especially Marie-Louise Van Franz.

The best critique of him from a Traditionalist/Perennialist perspective is to be found in the essay "Modern Psychology" by Titus Burckhardt, which appears, among other places, in the anthology **Every Branch in Me: Essays on the Meaning of Man**, edited by Barry McDonald for World Wisdom Books. Jung seems to have a more metaphysical approach to the psyche than Freud, but this is not really the case. He "officially" denied the existence, or at least the psychological relevance, of the Transcendent (though it appears that he believed in God), and defined his "collective unconscious" as intrinsically incapable of being perceived as it is, being detectable only by the reactions it provokes; he saw it as based on residues of ancestral experience reaching back even to the animal level, residues which are presently mediated by the structure of the brain as it has evolved over the aeons. Thus Jung effectively deified the sub-human, by misrepresenting the psychic reflections of the Archetypes of the Intelligible Plane he encountered in his own psychic experience and that of his patients as the upsurgings of various primitive emotional/cognitive reactions. Consequently his goal of "individuation" simply mimics, and may in many cases block and subvert, the traditional goal of self-actualization, seeing that there can be no self-actualization without self-transcendence, no ordering of the psychic subjectivity except in reference to, and by the power of, a Spiritual objectivity that transcends it, witnesses it, and by the Grace of which it may be instructed, saved and healed.

What interests me about Jung is not his theoretical structure, which is both erroneous and subversive, but the various psychic phenomena he encountered in his researches. "Archetypes" such as the Ego, the Persona, the Shadow, the Anima, the Animus and the Self seem to me to be true psychic traces or reflections of metaphysical principles-or of the egoic subversion of these principles-which might be capable of providing both valid intimations of celestial realities and various perspectives on the "fall" of the human psyche into egotism and identification with the material world. The canny "hands-on" expertise that Jung showed in his dealing with these manifestations, when it was not vitiated by his "Jungianism", undoubtedly gave him the ability to act as a true psychopomp from time to time, at least on certain levels. (The same can certainly be said of his disciple Marie-Louise Von Franz.) But he was in no way a spiritual master, and his strictly psychic approach to the psyche may have effectively blocked the further spiritual development even of those he was able to help. Suffice it to say that Jungianism is filled with errors and dangers, and consequently can be of no real help on the spiritual Path-until, that is, someone definitively criticizes it according to metaphysical principles, rejecting whatever is clearly erroneous and recasting the rest in solidly metaphysical terms-presuming that such a radical revision is even possible.

What did I learn from the Jungians? I learned that dreams are of great import, that they are a language of symbols, and that I knew how to read that language; I learned that psychic experience, if correctly understood and responsibly related to, is a necessary element of the spiritual Path, and that such understanding can throw a valuable light on life as a whole; and I learned (though this lesson derived as much if not more from the writings of Ananda Coomaraswamy and René Guénon as it did from the Jungians and various writers influenced by them, such as Joseph Campbell) that mythopoesis-poetry,

folklore, fairy tales, folk songs, scripture, myth per se, as well as most or all of the pre-modern arts taken in their symbolic or "didactic" aspect-concealed and revealed profound mysteries, so much so that it was correct to say that myths were often simply metaphysics told as symbolic narrative, while much of metaphysics was nothing less (as with Plato) than the discursive exegesis of myth. All these lessons suffered, however, from lack of a traditional, objective context that could unpack their riches and protect those studying them (including myself) from the intellectual errors and psychic glammers that unprepared excursions into the underworld of the "collective unconscious" (often aided, in my generation, by psychedelic drugs) inevitably carried in their train. I ultimately found that context, thank God, in the writers of the Traditionalist/Perennialist School and the lore and practice of Sufism. When Huston Smith first showed me Guénon's **Symbols of Sacred Science**, I said to myself: "This is what I was looking for in Robert Graves' **The White Goddess** but never found".

9 - To what extent can our sensory experience of the tangible world play a part in our encounter with the Spirit ? Is Sufism a mystical path or a gnosis ?

Either Fariddudin Attar (author of the **Parliament of the Birds**) or the Argentinian writer of metaphysical enigmas, fables and satires, Jorge Luis Borges, authored the following lines (Borges attributed them to Attar): "The Zahir is the shadow of the Rose/And the rending of the veil". The Zahir is a Name of God which means "the Outward". If we under the Spirit as transcending the sensory world, and come into a deep enough relation to It, then the sensory world will become transformed from a veil into a theophany; it will present us with a vision of the Divine Immanence. The Zahir is certainly a "shadow of the Rose", of the celestial order; but if we can witness the celestial even in the terrestrial, then this most certainly will be "the rending of the veil". An appreciation for the beauties of Virgin Nature and sacred art, if our sensibilities are sufficiently free of psychological and materialistic glammers, can be definite supports for contemplation. But this will only be true if we are subject neither to the tendency to see the material world on the one hand as self-created, a closed system, or on the other as the romantic and/or terrifying realm of the Great Goddess-unless, that is, we recognize her in her true form as the Creative Maya of the Absolute.

Guénon's hard and fast distinction between "mysticism" and "esoterism" is not entirely helpful in my opinion, unless one takes the 16th century Spanish mystics, for example, as representing mysticism per se. According to Guénon, esoterism is initiatory, active and systematic, while mysticism is non-initiatory, passive and sporadic; also, mysticism tends to be generally emotive, and more centered upon ecstasis than realization. Mysticism is a gift; esoterism is a path. Defined in this way, Sufism is more an esoterism than a mysticism. However, according to the way the word "mysticism" is used in the English-speaking world-to denote any approach to or incidence of the direct experience of God-Sufism may certainly be characterized as "Islamic mysticism."

In Sufism, gnosis or *ma'rifa* is central, but such *ma'rifa* does not take place in the absence of *mahabbah* or the love of God. Love delights to dwell upon its object and comes to know it intimately. And one might say that Sufism embraces mysticism as one of its aspects, since it also recognizes spiritual states (*ahwal*) as gifts of God, often unexpected, not as acquisitions. It is not strictly a path of "spiritual achievement"; if it were, it would be inherently false. However, since it is also a path of spiritual stations (*maqamat*), where the potentials inherent in spiritual states are realized and confirmed in a stable way, through spiritual effort, as knowledge and virtue, it goes beyond the

"passivity" of mysticism (in Guénon's definition of the term) and becomes supremely active. The activity in question is not, however, Promethean; it is not the heroic individual's conquest of his freedom and the higher worlds of reality, as Julius Evola would have it. It is rather the activity of obedience to religious norms and to the directives of one's shaykh, as well as the development of the kind of "active receptivity"-poles apart from passive resignation-that keeps constant vigil, waiting at attention for the next thing that God will do or command. And ultimately the path of *tasawwuf* is supremely active because the only one acting is God, who, in the words of Thomas Aquinas, is "pure Act". As Javad Nurbakhsh put it (in my paraphrase), "If at the beginning of the Path you attribute your actions to God, you are an unbeliever; the responsibility to fulfill your duties and avoid transgressions is yours alone. But if at the end of the Path you attribute any action whatsoever to yourself, not to God, then you are equally an unbeliever; the realized Sufi knows that no-one acts but Allah."

10 - What is the biggest threat which hangs over Islam today ?

Islam is being attacked by both military force and cultural subversion. The agenda of the U.S. Government and the globalist powers behind it is nothing less than to destroy Islam by setting the *batinis* and the *zahiris*, the "tolerant Muslims" (as defined by them-mostly Sufis) and the "Islamicist/fundamentalists" (as defined by them, some of whom are undoubtedly being deliberately provoked and sometimes covertly funded, trained and directed by them) at war with each other, just as they set the Sunnis and the Shi'a at war in Iraq. The U.S. government and the military, unless they are totally out of touch with reality, know very well that they cannot eliminate the Iraqi insurgents, or the Taliban, or those groups who have adopted the name "al-Qaeda" (which, I am told, was the name of the C.I.A.'s terrorist database), whether they be groups clandestinely formed by the Western powers-as we know the Taliban was founded by the C.I.A. as a counter-Russian insurgency-or are ignorantly imitating that highly influential and largely misrepresented, if not mostly fictitious, organization. (Benazir Bhutto, in a David Frost interview, spoke of "the man who killed Bin Laden" This was deleted from the televised version but I am told that the original cut is available on YouTube.) What they *do* believe they can do however, by openly supporting the "good Muslims" while covertly provoking or funding the "bad Muslims", is create the kind of chaos that will destroy traditional *dar al-Islam*; up to now they have obviously been quite successful at this. Their method is "divide and conquer": set the Sunnis against the Shi'a, the Sufis against the Salafis, and (in the U.S.) the Muslims against the Christians, through their patronage of the highly inflammatory Ground Zero Mosque for example (whose Imam, Feisal Abdul Rauf, is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations)-because it's quite clear to me that they also want to limit religious freedom in the U.S. and destroy any form of Christianity that they can't control. The Bin Laden family, remember, had and probably still has close ties with the Bush family, whose *paterfamilias* is both an ex-U.S. president (as his son was) and ex-director of the CIA, and the major Muslim ally of the U.S. in the Middle East is Saudi Arabia, the stronghold of the Wahhabis from whom many if not most of today's Muslim terrorists developed.

One goal of these forces is to groom Sufism as an alternative to "fundamentalist" Wahhabi/Salafi Islam, an alternative that will hopefully be more passive to control by the West and/or the Globalists. Jalaluddin Rumi, for example, is being presented both as the patron of Turkey's entry into the European Union and the poster-boy of the Iranian opposition, as well as appearing on the website of the Pakistani Security Forces as a

representative of traditional Sufism, since in Pakistan the West is trying to enlist the Sufis against the Taliban, who are in the habit of blowing up the shrines of Sufi saints-if these aren't simply false flag operations carried out by western agents and then blamed on the Taliban. UNESCO even designated 2007 as "The International Year of Rumi". And the Interfaith Movement in the U.S., which is in many ways a vector for U.S./globalist control of the religions, has adopted him as a representative of interfaith unity and global peace, even though Rumi himself said:

When has religion ever been one? It has always been two or three, and war has always raged among coreligionists. How are you going to unify religion? On the Day of Resurrection it will be unified, but here in this world that is impossible because everybody has a different desire and want. Unification is not possible here. At the Resurrection, however, when all will be united, everyone will look to one thing, everyone will hear and speak one thing. [Jalaluddin Rumi, **Signs of the Unseen (Fihi ma-Fihi)**, Threshold Books edition, p. 29].

Certain Sufis may naively think that there is nothing wrong with playing the role of "good, tolerant Muslim" for their globalist patrons; after all, haven't they been long oppressed by these fundamentalist/Islamicists? And aren't they now collecting powerful allies at last? Success! It is unfortunately the case, however, that certain Islamicist groups are also being infiltrated and/or supported by the West and the Globalists, whose support and funding of Sufism is more-or-less open (except for their CIA contacts and things of that nature), and whose support for Islamicist groups is clandestine. Why would the powers that be support both sides? The question is not hard to answer: the powers that be *always* attempt to control both sides so they can "play both sides against the middle", the middle in this case being traditional Sufism and traditional Islam. The West and the Globalists are dedicated to deconstructing dar al-Islam, both by military force and by cultural/spiritual infiltration. They want to destroy Islam as a religion because it is one of the main obstacles to their plans for a One World Government. And they have realized that the best way to do this is to separate *batinis* and *zahiris* and set them at war. The more violent the Islamicist terrorists become, the more vulnerable the Sufis become to co-optation and control by those forces who oppose the Islamicists on one level, attempt to control them on another level, and are actually behind some of them on a third. The co-optation of *tasawwuf*, the spiritual heart of Islam, by these forces leaves the remaining *zahiri* Islam that much more vulnerable to radicalization; if hearts are veiled from true remembrance of God, all that people can see any more is *al-dunya*, the world of politics and its "imperatives". This is why those Sufis who have sufficient insight and courage to resist co-optation must do their best to form an Islamic "remnant", in line with the *hadith* of Muhammad, "Islam began in exile and will end in exile; blessed are those who are in exile!"